

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 INRE-00 IO-14

SS-20 NSC-07 SSO-00 NSCE-00 SCI-06 MC-02 OMB-01

TRSE-00 PA-04 PRS-01 USIE-00 DRC-01 PM-07 SPC-03 /123 W

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O R 281626Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9129

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 03938

FOR: BRUSSELS FAA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, SENV, UK, FR

SUBJECT: CONCORDE

REF: LONDON 3886

1. I WANT TO UNDERSCORE TO ALL WASHINGTON AGENCIES THE COMMENTS CONTAINED IN REFTEL. FOR THE USG TO PROCEED WITH THE ISSUANCE OF AN NPRM ON SST ENGINE EMISSIONS AT THIS TIME WHEN THE QUESTION OF CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE CONCORDE PROJECT IS A BURNING POLITICAL ISSUE IN THE UK WOULD, IN MY VIEW, BE A MISTAKE OF SERIOUS PROPORTIONS. THE U.S. WOULD GAIN ONLY FEW WEEKS TIME IN THE RULEMAKING PROCESS AND WOULD RISK BEING CAUGHT UP IN THE POLITICAL CONTROVERSY HERE IN THE UK OVER WHETHER THE CONCORDE PROGRAM SHOULD BE SCRAPPED.

2. WEDGEWOOD BENN'S STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON MARCH 18 ON THE ENORMOUS FINANCIAL LOSSES INVOLVED IN CONTINUING  
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CONCORDE PLACED THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM IN SERIOUS

DOUBT. ITS FUTURE WAS PUT IN FURTHER DOUBT BY THE CHANCELLOR'S BUDGET STATEMENT IN WHICH HE SAID "...WE MUST AVOID SPENDING LARGE SUMS OF MONEY AND SKILLED MAN-POWER ON PROJECTS WHICH USE HIGH TECHNOLOGY AND ARE UNLIKELY TO BRING AN ECONOMIC RETURN." HE IMMEDIATELY WENT ON TO SAY THAT CONCORDE WAS UNDER REVIEW AND PENDING FINAL DECISIONS, HIS BUDGET DID NOT ALLOW FOR ANY EXPENDITURE BEYOND THE EXISTING PROGRAM. I BELIEVE IT IS CLEAR FROM THE CHANCELLOR'S STATEMENT THAT THE BRITISH WILL NOT AGREE TO THE FRENCH PROPOSAL FOR AN INCREASE IN PRODUCTION AND IT IS QUESTIONABLE AT THIS TIME WHETHER THEY WILL AGREE TO GO AHEAD WITH THE SIXTEEN AIRCRAFT PRESENTLY AUTHORIZED.

3. THE LABOR GOVERNMENT'S DECISION ON CONCORDE WILL BE A DIFFICULT ONE. THEY WILL BE UNDER GREAT PRESSURE FROM THE BRITISH AEROSPACE INDUSTRY AND FROM TRADE UNIONS AND CIVIC GROUPS WHO WILL BE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED IF THE PROGRAM IS CANCELLED. CONSEQUENTLY THIS ISSUE IS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE POLITICALLY FOR THE LABOR GOVERNMENT AND FOR INDUSTRY SECRETARY BENN.

4. IN MY VIEW, IF THE USG PROCEEDS WITH THE ISSUANCE OF AN NPRM ON SST ENGINE EMISSIONS WHILE THIS POLITICAL POT IS BOILING, WE RISK MAKING OURSELVES A PARTY TO THE CONTROVERSY AND COULD BE USED AS THE SCAPEGOAT BY THOSE WHO SEEK TO AVOID THE BLAME THEMSELVES FOR THE MISTAKES THAT HAVE BROUGHT THE UK TO ITS PRESENT DILEMMA.

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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